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REGARD TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE
DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF
INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES
AND PEOPLES

MILITARY ACTIVITIES AND ARRANGEMENTS BY COLONIAL POWERS IN TERRITORIES UNDER THEIR ADMINISTRATION WHICH MIGHT BE IMPEDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE GRANTING OF INDEPENDENCE TO COLONIAL COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES

UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS

Working paper prepared by the Secretariat

1. Basic information on political, economic and social conditions in the United States Virgin Islands is contained in the general working paper prepared for the current session of the Special Committee (A/AC.109/1064). Supplementary information on military activities and arrangements in the Territory is set out below. 1/

2. In 1967, the Government of the United States of America transferred possession of its former naval base on St. Thomas (an area of 80 hectares) to the territorial Government, but retained the right to reoccupy the facility. At present, the United States Navy maintains a radar and sonar calibration station on St. Croix and an underwater tracking station off its west coast. The United States Coast Guard maintains a detachment on St. Thomas. The United States Virgin Islands National Guard, which is affiliated with the United States Army, also has its headquarters on St. Thomas. In addition, a permanent recruitment station for the United States armed forces is based on St. Thomas and a recruitment centre for the United States Marine Corps was established on St. Croix in April 1988.

United States Navy

3. In February 1991, Lieutenant-Governor Derek Hodge, acting for Governor Alexander Farrelly, announced that the Government of the United States Virgin Islands had entered into an agreement with the United States Navy for the latter's temporary use of the territorial Government's facility on St. John for the testing of non-hazardous equipment. The acting Governor noted that it was a classified naval operation and that further information would not be released. A spokesman for the United States Navy stated, however, that the operation was being conducted jointly with the United States Coast Guard and the United States Customs Service and was not related to the military activities of the United States during the Gulf war. 2/

4. The Territory continued to be a port of call for United States naval vessels and those of its allies. In this connection, a number of United States naval vessels, including nuclear-powered aircraft carriers and attack submarines, visited the Territory from mid-1990 to early 1991. The vessels included the USS Theodore Roosevelt (500 crew members), the USS Abraham Lincoln (5,000 crew members), the USS Pasadena (130 crew members), the USS America (4,715 crew members) and the USS Peterson. As in 1989, the Danish training ship Denmark, with 17 crew members and 80 cadets, visited the Territory in December 1990. 3/

United States Coast Guard

5. Currently, the United States Coast Guard maintains a detachment on St. Thomas and patrols the Territory's waters. The Coast Guard also contributes to efforts against drug trafficking in the area. To that end, special arrangements have been made with the neighbouring British Virgin Islands (see A/AC.109/1060, para. 94). It was reported in January 1991 that according to a spokesman for the Coast Guard, the United States Coast Guard operating in the Territory was maintaining a "heightened state of awareness" following the eruption of hostilities in the Persian Gulf. 4/

Virgin Islands National Guard

6. According to reports in the local press, over 300 members of the Virgin Islands National Guards (VING) had been called to active duty and transported to the Gulf region. In a statement to the Rotary Club of Charlotte Amalie in January 1991, Brigadier General Rudolph Francis, Assistant Adjutant General of VING, said that up to 60 per cent or nearly 600 members of VING could be called to active duty. Asked whether a limit could be applied to the percentage of residents of a state or a territory who could serve during a war, the Assistant Adjutant General answered in the negative. He stated further that the seemingly disproportionate number of United States Virgin Islanders in the war zone was "unfortunate and ironic", particularly when statistics also indicated that on a per capita basis, of those who died in

Viet Nam, more came from the Virgin Islands than from any other area in the United States. He noted, however, that not all VING members might be sent to the Gulf; some units would be deployed to other areas. A VING engineering unit was scheduled to go to Central America on a peace mission later that month. 5/

7. In March 1991, the VING armory at Estate Bethlehem on St. Croix was formally inaugurated. Designed by a local firm and built by a United States-based construction company, the armory will form part of a national guard complex, including the national guard headquarters and military academy. Under an agreement between the United States Government and the territorial Government, the federal National Guard Bureau financed the full cost of construction estimated at $US 5.5 million, in exchange for which the 28-hectare site was ceded to the United States Government for 50 years. The ownership of the land and the building would revert to the territorial Government thereafter. A similar but smaller armory was expected to be completed by July 1991 at Estate Nazareth on St. Thomas. 6/

Other developments 7/

8. According to the local press, a spokesman for the United States Army Recruitment Center on St. Thomas stated in January 1991 that since the start of the crisis in the Persian Gulf in August 1990, recruitment had remained at much the same level, or may have increased.

Notes

1/ The information contained in the present paper is derived from published reports.

2/ The Daily News (United States Virgin Islands), 8 February 1991.

3/ Ibid., 7 July 1990, 2, 4 and 9 October 1990, 2 November 1990, 19 December 1990 and 31 January 1991.

4/ Ibid., 22 January 1991.

5/ Ibid., 14, 16, 17 and 23 January 1991.

6/ Ibid., 2 March 1991.

7/ Ibid., 23 June and 8 October 1990 and 19 January 1991.